

VI. *An Abstract of a Book, Entituled,*
NEKPOKHΔEIA: *Or, The Art of Embalming;*
wherein is shewn the Right of Burial and Funeral
Ceremonies, especially that of Preserving Bodies af-
ter the Egyptian Method. Together with an Account
of the Egyptian Mummies, Pyramids, Subterranean
Vaults and Lamps, and their Opinion of the Metem-
psychosis, the Cause of their Embalming: As also
a Geographical description of Egypt, the Rise and
Course of the Nile, the Temper, Constitution and
Physick of the Inhabitants; their Inventions, Arts,
Sciences, Stupendious Works and Sepulchres, and o-
ther curious Observations any ways relating to the Phy-
siology and Knowledge of this Art. Part I. Illu-
strated with a Map and fourteen Sculptures. By
Tho. Greenhill, Surgeon. In 4to. London, 1705.

IN considering the great Inroachments and daily Abuses
of the *Undertakers* by practising the *Balsamic Art*, as
also how little had been wrote on that subject, the *Author*
was willing to vindicate the Honour of his Company,
and to retrieve the Practice of so ancient, so useful, and
so noble an Art as that of *Embalming*: He was therefore
desirous that some Ingenious and Learned Person, through-
ly qualify'd by the Knowledge and Practice of the several
Branches of *Physick*, might have undertaken this Work;
but meeting with none that would give themselves so

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much trouble, he thought it better to exert his small Talent, than that the *Balsamic Art*, which bears so considerable a Figure in *Surgery*, as well as other *Sciences*, should be neglected and passed by as a matter not worth taking notice of. A farther motive to his Undertaking was, that he hoped by submitting with the greatest modesty and humility to the Learned World, they would excuse all faults, by reason, it is not so much to be found fault with, if in attempting to find out an unbeaten Path, one often mistake ones way.

To this end therefore he applys himself, by way of Letter, to three Persons, who for their skill in History, Antiquities and Languages; their knowledge of Books, Manuscripts, or Things themselves, as well as their Experience and Practice in *Physick* and *Surgery*, evidently appear to be proper Judges of this matter.

The first Letter is addressed to *Charles Bernard, Esq;*, Serjeant-Surgeon to her *Majesty*; at that time Master of the Surgeons Company, and one of the Surgeons of *St Bartholomew's Hospital*.

In this Letter the *Author* shews the Excellency of *Surgery*, and that *Anatomy* and *Embalming* are Branches thereof, and equally to be esteem'd; the one informing us of the constituent Parts of the Body, and the other preserving them fresh in our Sights and Memories: That *Embalming* is no less ancient and noble than *Surgery* itself, whence he infers the Authority and Reasonableness of its Use: That the *Naturalists*, the *Physician*, the *Surgeon*, and the *Anatomist* reap great advantages in the way of Knowledge, from the preservation of Animals and other Rarities. The *Naturalist* makes use of it in collecting and preserving a numberless variety of Things in the Animal and Vegetable World. The *Physician*, in preserving the Juices of the Body from Malignant and Putrid Feavers. It teaches the *Surgeon* the Art of Bandage or Rouling; as also to know what Remedies are proper against Mortifications, &c.

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It teaches both the *Physician* and *Surgeon* (by *Anatomy*) the situation and parts of a Man's Body, and to prepare true and natural Schemes of the Veins, Arteries, Nerves, &c. Then he observes, that without the *Balsamic Art Anatomy* is deficient; inasmuch as it can neither so particularly, nor frequently show us, what in conjunction with it, may be, without any offence, contemplated at any time, and as often as we please; so that the present Age accounts the chief use of this Art to be in *Anatomical* Preparations, as also that the Knowledge of it may be necessary in our Domestic and Culinary Affairs; such as conserving all sorts of Roots, Herbs and Fruits; preserving Wines, Fruits, Flesh, Fish, &c. But the more antient, more general, and more proper use of *Embalming* lies in preserving a Human Dead Body intire; more Ancient, as having been devised by the Wise and Learned *Egyptians*, and more general, in that it relates to every particular Person; which nevertheless being looked upon as an unnecessary expensive trouble, was another reason for him to assert, that *Embalming* was a particular part of that Duty, which obliges all Mankind to take care of their Dead. In order to this, he first gives us some cogent Reasons to prove the Right of Burial, what things are necessary thereto, whether Ceremonies are needless and Superstitious, or Monuments Vain-glorious, and this he lays down according as Nature dictates, the Law of *God* appoints, and the Law of Nations directs and obliges. Then he shews the want of Burial to be a Punishment and Curse, and that even the particular Ceremonies of Funerals are not to be neglected; yet withal cautions his Reader to avoid the mistake of thinking the want of it, or any particular Ceremony thereof, may be any ways prejudicial to a Christian Soul, or any occasion of the deficiency of the least part of the Body at the Resurrection, and only shows the Infamy and Disgrace of a Body being denied Burial; and how far, wherefore and to what end the following customs are to be made use of;

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such as *Kissing* the Dead, *Closing* their Eyes, *Conclamation*, *Sound*ing Brazen Vessels, *Washing*, *Anointing* or *Embalming* the Dead, *Adorning*, *Dressing* and *Crowning* the Corps, *Laying* it out, *Carrying* it forth, the *Funeral Procession*, *Burning* or *Burying* the Corps, the manner of *Mourning*, and in short, many things relating to the fore and after part of the *Funeral Duty* ; giving a great variety of pertinent Quotations out of Ancient Authors, intermixed with good conjectures of what inducements the Ancients were influenc'd by, in falling into and adhering to their various and respective Customs : But his main View is to show how far these *Funeral Rites* and Ceremonies are useful and allowable, when accompanied with the Art of *Embalming* ; and on the contrary, how vain and ridiculous they are when used without it ; especially if they do but in the least exceed the bounds of Modesty and Frugality. And thus having shewn, as aforesaid, how and when *Funeral Ceremonies* are useful, as also that they are insignificant without *Embalming* ; he tells you moreover, “ That care is due ‘ to the Body, tho’ Lifeless, upon the consideration, that ‘ the Soul, in a separate state, longs for Re-union, and ‘ wishes her Dead Companion to share in her then present ‘ felicity, by virtue of eternizing Monuments. He sets ‘ forth, that *Embalming* is the best and most lively way of ‘ preserving the memory of deceased Friends, by giving a ‘ real Presence, instead of faint and shadowy Representations, and brings abundance of *Theological*, *Physical* and ‘ *Political* Arguments, in vindication of the Art of *Embalming* ; but not having room to insert them, we will only mention two or three of the latter.

‘ First, If we take it in a general sense, as the Art of preserving the Memory of Man, as well as his Body, it is very ‘ extensive and infinite. In this sense, all the Monuments ‘ of the Ancients, Statues, Poems, Writings, &c. may be ‘ esteemed a kind of *Embalming* : And in the same respect, *Fame* may not improperly be called the Goddess and Patroness

troneſs of *Embalming*, and *Mercury* her chief Miniſter, to proclaim to the World the Heroic Acts of memorable and famous Men. Secondly, Having ſhewn that all things intended to preſerve a Name may be comprehended under this general ſenſe of *Embalming*, he ſets forth, that the *Balſamic* Art, properly ſo called, is at once the beſt and moſt durable way to compaſs that end, all other Monuments being known to decay and moulder. Thirdly, the *Balſamic* Art is recommended not only by its duration, but by its great uſe in other Sciences; particularly *Phyſiology*, *Anatomy*, *Surgery* and *Phyſick*, as intimated above. Fourthly, *Embalming* is neceſſary for transporting Bodies to the Paternal Sepulchres, for which moſt People have a particular deſire. Fifthly, *Embalming* not only prevents the Plague and Putrefactions, and conſequently frees from the Terror and Deformity of Death, but likewiſe ſecures dead Bodies from the inſults of Inſects and Brutes, by reaſon of its bitter and ungrateful Taſte. Laſtly, Conſidering the *Egyptian* way of *Embalming* by rolling, and the Modern by wrapping up in Searcloath, obſcure the Object, and are alſo imperfect upon ſeveral other accounts, the *Author* endeavours to ſhow a poſſibility of inventing a method how to preſerve the whole *Compages* of the Body for ever without Putrefaction, in ſuch manner as its Texture and Structure may remain entire, of the ſame proportion as before, and of the ſame Colour and Flexibility, without any viſible contraction, diminution or unconformity of Parts, whereby the Dead Corps may be kept by the Parents, or handled by the *Anatomist* without any offensive Smell, or ſtupidious *Mador*. So that Bodies thus *Embalmed* ſeem not to be dead but aſleep, waiting for the Reſurrection, and differ from the Living in nothing but Speech and Motion.

The ſecond Letter is inſcrib'd to Dr *John Lawſon*, ſome-time *Preſident* of the College of *Physicians*, *London*; in which, altho *Embalming* be its chiefly intended ſcope, yet the

the *Author* considering that the *Egyptians* have been allowed to be the first Inventors of Arts and Sciencies, and that they were the only People who used this particular manner of *Embalming*, treated of in this Letter, he thought it requisite to consider every particular circumstance of time and place, the several Drugs, Plants, Minerals and many other things which are advantageous to the *Egyptians* above other Nations, as also to enquire into the reasons which induced them to study this Art, and after what manner they came to find it out. To this end, he gives a short Geographical Description of *Egypt*, and takes notice of the Salubrity of its Air and Water, with the Rise and Course of the *Nile*, Fertility of the Soil and Sagacity of the People, with several necessary Remarks on their Religion, Customs, Arts, Diseases, Physick and whatever else might tend to the Discovery and Knowledge of this lost Art. Wherefore in the first place he shews how *Egypt* is situated and bounded, together with its Extent, Division, its several Denominations, Number of Cities and Inhabitants, as also how it came to be so populous, and to be accounted the Mistress of the World, and Mother of Arts and Sciences. He gives the Characters of both the Ancient and Modern *Egyptians*, with their Make, Complexion, Temper, Constitution, Habit of Body and Diseases; how fruitful they were in Children, very long liv'd and of great Antiquity: That they were the first Inventors of *Physic*, *Anatomy*, *Chymistry*, *Surgery* and *Embalming*; of *Geometry*, *Astronomy*, *Mathematics* and the like; from whence it came to pass, they performed greater and more wonderful Works than the World besides. He shews you their opinion of the *Metempsychosis*, and their Belief in the Resurrection; how they came at first to find out *Embalming*, and how they performed it. That there were several kinds of *Embalming*, viz. with *Asphalt* or *Pissasphalt*, with Oyl or Gum of Cedar, with Aromatics and Spices. That there were several Officers belonging to this Work, such as a *Clerk*, a *Priest*,

Priest, or a Physician; an Embalmer or Surgeon; a Pollincator or Apothecary; a Dissector or Anatomist; a Librarian or Salter; a Designer or Painter, a Herald, Carver and the like: Also *ἑταῖρος* a Dresser of the Dead and *ἑταῖρος* one that furnished all necessaries for Funerals, called in Latin, *Libitinarius*. He likewise shews the particular Ceremonies used about the Dead, such as were their Coffins and Scrolles painted with Hieroglyphick Characters, &c. the Books, Writings, Arms, Medals, Images, *Averruncal*, *Prophylactic* and *Polycharakteristick* Statues; which were either included in, hanging upon, or appertaining to the *Mummies*, representing their Superstitions and Magical way of Embalming. Then he tells you, that after every thing was got ready for the Funeral, how the *Embalmed* Body was put on Board a Ship called *Barris*, and by the Ferryman *Charon* wafted over the Lake *Acherusia*, and there judged and tryed according to the several Virtues, Vices and Actions of its past Life; and accordingly either honoured with the greatest Praises and Commendations, and Magnificently Interr'd, or else mightily exclaimed against, and deprived of Sepulture: That it was this that made even the *Egyptian* Kings themselves to live uprightly, fearing so much as to anger the common People whilst alive, lest they should incur their Eternal Hatred after their Death.

Our Author likewise adds, that the *Egyptians*, to prevent borrowing, which was the Parent of Idleness, Frauds and Branglings, suffered none to borrow, but on condition they pawned the Body of their Ancestor, and it was reputed both an Impiety and Infamy, not to redeem it so soon as it was possible; so precious a Pledge was it esteemed, inasmuch, he that dyed before he had acquitted that Duty, was denied Burial. Other strange Ceremonies he recounts, such as putting the *Embalmed* Bodies into Cases Carved after their own similitude, and setting them up in Niches in their Halls and Parlours in great order and very richly adorned, where they took a great delight to see a long
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Race of Ancestors., in a manner with as much satisfaction as if they were alive and conversant with them: Nay, as several Authors assert, they placed them at Table like Guests, and made merry with them, by Eating and Drinking; but he concludes, that such as Buried their Dead out of their Houses, in the Fields and Plains, built *Sepulchres* for them, as noble as possible their circumstances would admit, chusing rather to have their Monuments magnificently built, than their Dwelling Houses; forasmuch as they despised the present Life, and took little care in building their Habitations, looking upon them but as so many Inns and Baiting places, where they were to inhabit but for a Season; whereas the Glory of a future Life, that was to be procured by Virtue, they greatly esteemed, and consequently spent their whole Care, Study and Riches about the magnificency of their Sepulchres, which they called Sempiternal and Eternal Houses, looking upon the time they are to dwell here on Earth, as nothing, in respect of the stay they were to make in the Grave.

The third Letter is to Dr *Hans Sloane*, Secretary to the Royal Society, and Fellow of the College of Physicians, *London*.

Being a succinct account of the *Pyramids*, *Subterranean Vaults* and *Lamps* of the *Egyptians*; for as in the foregoing Letter was fully shewn the manner of *Embalming* Dead Bodies, in this the *Sepulchres* or Repositories wherein they were laid, is chiefly consider'd: Forasmuch as the *Egyptians* did not only content themselves with preserving their Dead from Putrefaction, but likewise with equal care provided *Conditories* that might be lasting as the Body, and in which it might continue secure, both from the Injuries of Time and Persons, because they Religiously believed, that so long as the Body endured, so long would the Soul continue with it, not as a quickning or animating Spirit, but as an Attendant or Guardian, without going into any other Body, as otherwise they thought it would,

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